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**Capital Budget Committee**

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**HB 2275**

**Brief Description:** Expanding the criteria for habitat conservation programs.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Mastin and Dunshee.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Makes changes to the statutory formula for allocations under the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) and creates two new categories.
- Requires state agencies receiving WWRP grants to pay an amount in lieu of property taxes and pay for control of noxious weeds.

**Hearing Date:** 1/29/04

**Staff:** Charlie Gavigan (786-7340).

**Background:**

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) provides funds for the acquisition and development of local and state parks, water access sites, trails, critical wildlife habitat, and urban wildlife habitat. Counties, cities, ports, park and recreation districts, school districts, state agencies, and tribes are eligible to apply. Local and tribal governments must provide at least a 50 percent match in cash or in-kind contributions. Grants applications are evaluated annually and the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation submits a list of prioritized projects to the Governor and Legislature for approval. Half the funds appropriated in a biennium for the WWRP are for habitat conservation and the other half for outdoor recreation, allocated by formulas established in statute.

**Summary of Bill:**

Two new categories are added to the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) and changes are made to the statutory formula for allocations made under the program. Categories for farmlands and riparian habitat are added to the existing categories for outdoor recreation and habitat conservation (local and state parks, water access sites, trails, critical wildlife habitat, and urban wildlife habitat). For appropriations up to \$40 million for a biennium, the allocation is the same as current law: half for outdoor recreation projects and half for habitat conservation projects. If the appropriation is over \$40 million, the allocation for the entire appropriation is \$20 million for outdoor recreation projects, \$20 million for habitat conservation projects, and the amount over \$40 million is allocated as follows: 30% for outdoor recreation projects, 30% for

habitat conservation projects, 30% for the new riparian protection category; and 10% for the new farmlands preservation category.

State agencies receiving WWRP grants must pay an amount in lieu of property taxes and pay an amount for control of noxious weeds.

The Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation is authorized to accept donations for the WWRP.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on 4/23/03.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2005.